



Black and *Pink* Newsletter

JUNE 2010 ISSUE

BLACK AND PINK— NEWSLETTER, C/O COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON,
565 BOYLSTON ST, BOSTON, MA 02116

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Dear Friends,

June is Pride Month!!!! The act of having pride in being a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer person is a radical act! We are told to hate ourselves, that we are mistakes, that we should not be seen as fully human, and on and on. To stand up and be counted as one of the millions of people in the world who defies the socialization process to be straight or gender normative is a radical act. To do that while incarcerated and stuck behind the walls of our oppressors is a REVOLUTIONARY act!

We are living in a really challenging world right now. BP's oil spill in the Gulf, off the shores of New Orleans, just five years after the human made disaster of Katrina is exhausting for us to hold right now. The fact that they have chosen to use prison labor to clean up the mess is a continuation of the violence and oppression, using prisoners as exploited labor to clean up the mess of an international corporation is just continued proof of the evil that resides within the prison industrial complex. The State of Israel is continuing its violence by killing Turkish people attempting to bring aid to Gaza and stopping an Irish ship trying to do the same while at the same time murdering Palestinian people who were diving by the water. We are living in a really challenging world, yet we need to continue holding on to our pride and celebrating.

One of the ways we can continue to hold on to our pride is to remember that *pride* calls us to join in the collective movements for justice and liberation. I got a tattoo some time ago that reads, "we will be free when all are free." This is a reminder to me that as long as any of you are locked up that all of us have an obligation to work to see you free. However, it is also a reminder that as long as there is oil flowing into the oceans killing life forms and destroying our planet, we are not free. As long as Zionism continues and Palestinian people still suffer, we are not free. As long as police move freely on our streets and kill people of color, we are not free. As long as ANYONE is suffering under the thumb of oppression, not experiencing their full human potential, we are not free.

Pride is a time for hope. John Murray, one of the first Universalist ministers in the United States, preached the need for us to let go of our fear of hell and to hold on to hope and courage for the possibility of justice and reconciliation. There is already enough hell around us, especially behind the walls, and to live authentically as a person proud of one's queer or trans identity is to hold on to hope that we can live in a world, in a space that is truly free. Jose Esteban Munoz writes, "Queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present. Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing." So while you are filling yourself with pride during this month of remembering our histories, fill yourself also with hope for that experience of collective liberation that we must enact and create. We are responsible for our own liberation and in order for us to truly experience that liberation and freedom we must see it as tied to the liberation of all people. So what can you do from behind the walls? What are acts in your life you can do to both secure your own liberation and the liberation of all on this earth? Take time to act, to love, and to resist the violence we are continuously bombarded with. And as always, it has been said, once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

-Jason

Salute from Viktory

Salute!

The name is Viktory. I'm currently incarcerated and soon to be released (9.10.10), 35 yr old, New Afrikan Male, Native of Tampa, Florida, Representative and Co-founder (of an arm) of One of Urban Amerikkkas Well-Known "street-level orgs." Historically speaking "street-level orgs" have been extremely homophobic, mainly due to a lack of understanding on how "familial-homophobia" affects us all in a negative way. Often times those of us who are "heterosexual" find it hard to understand each and every "humyn" has the RIGHT to do whatever they feel inclined to do with their bodies, enter into any type of relationship they see fit and be free from discrimination, persecution, or abuse for exercising those rights!! From the stand point of one playing a "coordinating" role in a "street-level org" I find it very difficult to get that across. Familial homophobia has become engrained into my constituents entire psychological make up, so my job is to raise the political consciousness of my comrades and teach them that racism/sexism/lgbt-phobia is a ruling class ideology (weapon) used to keep us all divided, one against the other. I've got my work cut out for me! The U.S. dept. of "just-us" says that there are more than 21,000 active "gangs" in the U.S.A. with more than 750,000 members nationwide. That's 21,000 "street-level orgs" with massive revolutionary potential. Time to aggressively agitate, educate, and organize!! [writer includes a long list of resources that we will print in another issue] We can either get it right NOW, or come to terms with spending the remainder of our lives in a cage, or worse, become another statistic lying in a cold morgue. Remember these 5 points! Confidence! Determination! Ambition! Perseverance! Discipline! The choice is yours! Circle M-F A's!!

Viktory

Find Your Strength!

Dear friends,

I cried pure tears of regret, pain, and sympathy for the numerous soldiers who are being targeted and deprived because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

I share the same oppression of barbaric treatment, by the devilish regime that deprives millions of their constitutional rights of freedom of liberty. I'm incarcerated in Crossroads Corrections in Missouri, where the inmates have gotten relaxed without having a voice to speak against the guards racism, beatings, and rural area practices of not having an inclination of how to communicate with people of color or know exactly how to relate with cultural beliefs and religion. I have witnessed guards beat inmates and spray inmates with mace for the usage of fun or to impress fellow subordinates in showing their co-workers the extent of power they have, while prisoners are shackled behind their backs.

I, myself, have been a victim of such torturous actions of torment because i didn't answer a question or spoke out against the abuse of another inmate's righteous actions. In this state of Missouri Penal system, it's repeatedly exercised that guards get cousins, brothers, uncles, mothers, and even their elderly of kin hired to participate in the slavery monopoly of mistreatment of the prisoners. We are being given violations written by the connection of a family trio, then being taken in from of another associate or relative to be found guilty. Without ever having our voices heard, because the case workers have found us guilty based on their blood-line theory of truth.

We are locked down 23 hours a day and handcuffed to a chain like dogs, carried back and forth from our cells. And forced to sit in extremely filthy cold or overheated cells with bugs and lites flying around in the cells. Without having a preacher or any religious person visit the cells, but yet they sell the Holy Bible and Qur'an on Canteen for economy. These demons are selling God's word! Instead of giving us the allowance of the First Amendment...

So when I read about Utah Prison System, California, Florida, Georgia, and all others that carry the same racist regime of proto-type I pray for all my brothers and sisters, that have been trampled over and continue to get run over by foul acts of criminal activity. I want them all to know to love yourself and search for dependency on Truth, because no matter what they take from you, they can never take away the Greatest love of all, and that's knowing that we are a reflection of each other!

Find your strength! I'm in your mirror!

Mr. James Spann



Cities All Over the World Are Celebrating Pride During June!

"LGBT pride or gay pride is the concept that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people should be proud of their sexual orientation and gender identity. The movement has three main premises: that people should be proud of their sexual orientation and gender identity, that diversity is a gift, and that sexual orientation and gender identity are inherent and cannot be intentionally altered. The use of the abbreviated *gay pride* and *pride* have since become mainstream and shorthand expressions inclusive of all individuals in various LGBT communities.

The word *pride* is used in this case as an antonym for *shame*, which has been used to control and oppress LGBT persons throughout history. *Pride* in this sense is an affirmation of oneself and the community as a whole. The modern "pride" movement began after the "Stonewall riots" in 1969. Instead of backing down to unconstitutional raids by New York Police, gay people in local bars fought back. While it was a violent situation it also gave the underground community the first sense of communal pride in a very well publicized incident. From the yearly parade that commemorated the anniversary of the Stonewall riots began a national grassroots movement. Today many countries around the world celebrate LGBT pride. The pride movement has furthered the cause of gay rights by lobbying politicians, registering voters and increasing visibility to educate on issues important to LGBT communities. LGBT pride advocates work for equal "rights and benefits" for LGBT people.



Symbols of LGBT pride include the LGBT rainbow flag, butterfly, the Greek lambda symbol λ , and the pink as well as black triangles reclaimed from their past use." -*Wikipedia.org* (The one on the left is newly created by Reed Miller of *Black & Pink!*)

June 9-13 is Pride week in Boston, Massachusetts. Black & Pink will be there, reminding everyone not to forget our family behind bars, and encouraging people to write to everyone on the pen-pal list. This year's theme for Pride week is "Rights to Rights." The organizers explain below:

"Riots to Rights - Celebrating 40 Years of Progress" honors the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion that commenced the modern Gay Rights movement and commemorates the progress we've made as a community since those early days of the battle for equal rights. As Boston Pride celebrates its 40th Anniversary, we encourage our community to remember the brave pioneers before us who bravely took to the streets in protest and in anger, but with incredible hope that one day we would overcome the harsh shackles and restraints of hatred, bigotry and discrimination.



And from that early rebellion, rose rights and freedoms and progress that we slowly see coming to fruition. What this year's Pride theme does not do, however, is pretend that the struggle is over. We celebrate the progress that has been won thus far, but also recognize that across the globe- from Massachusetts to Moscow, Puerto Rico to Uganda, Taiwan to Sri Lanka, and thousands of lands across the world- we are still not wholly free. During Pride week, as we remember and reflect on how our journey started, let us all commit to doing our part to ensure that our remaining battles end in victory."

Black & Pink says: From Riots to...More Riots!
We don't just want rights, we want Queer Liberation!
No more closets, no more prisons!

Can You Imagine?

Can you imagine living in a place or an environment where absolutely no one cares about you?

Can you imagine living in a place where you're merely a number?

Can you imagine growing old and grey all by yourself without one single friend or companion?

Can you imagine slowly rotting away in a lonely cell?

Can you imagine time going by and no one even remembers you existed?

Can you imagine Christmas, Thanksgiving, and New Years passing without no one even bothering to mention your name during the holidays?

Can you imagine living miserably until you are 70, 80, or even 90 years old; when all of your family has long been dead?

I don't want to imagine any of this either; I'm only 28, but it's impossible not to when you're doing life in prison without the chance of parole.

-Michael Peterson

Michael is a fiction writer and just finished his first novel: Forbidden Urban Romance. It's a gay novel soon to be in the first re-write.

Poetical Kiss

In what seemed but only a moment
You captured that which was hidden
In dark realms of my soul
Where only loneliness had ridden
I read "One Word"
And felt all my emotions come to life
Touching on every point
Your words kept me satisfied
Wishing you "Sweet Dreams"
In a land I long to be
Where you are the treasure chest
To which I hold the key
Another tried to walk the path
That journeys to your soul
Misguided by crazy ideals
Maybe he lost control
He was a "Confused American"
Who couldn't win your heart
I too read this letter
But he did not possess the art
To hold and behold
One that consumes your soul
There is much passion in your work
Even I can not resist your draw
So "He seduced you with his words?"
Now it's time you hear mine
As I whisper deeply and ever so slowly
Like the hands that move with time
You are smiling now
As we both settle down
You've got me thinking "Apple Sauce"
But there is none to be found
As I indulge in this fantasy
I hope you are feeling this
For the sweetest moment came
When I felt your poetical kiss

-Charles Grady Deistchle

Pain Loves Me

Pain loved me
And when I push it away
It comes back and shoves me to the floor

I try to turn away
But it just jumps in my face so I can't ignore
Me it runs towards

When I feel I'm moving forward
And happy, it slaps me badly
My heart is cracking

While it's laughing at me
It grabs me and brings me closer when I try to run
away

I fight to get free
And when I do walk from it
It chases and bites me

We stay fighting
But pain is winning
Wearing me out
It sees that, now it's grinning

Pain is attracted to me
knows how to bruise-
black and blue- me

Asking the one above me
Why didn't he send pain to love me

Pain just says fxxk me

-Raheem, aka Griz

This Is It.

Memory in my touch
of all the things I love so much
and outside my window so clear
of all the things how I fear

Will you love me again
after I'm left for broken
Bleeding through these scars
For my love of you is greater than all the stars

My eyes seek your smiles of a past
I love you as the die are cast
To forever fight for all, just as I for you
Even after all the strength of my body is through

Memory in my touch
The taste of your lips is such
I remember before I hit the ground
On my own blood I begin to drown

Will you love me again
after my heart's truth spoken
standing before enemies in this prison
as they see without understanding that again I
have risen

My eyes to the soul strong and shown with tears
I stand here for my love, even as death nears
And all these years, This is it.
Will you love me
in the end?

-Cameron "Cail" Willett



William Fiessinger



Queer is a term that I embrace—it's claiming our culture that I love and they can't take away. -Reed Miller

A Letter by Valjean Royal

★ **TRIGGER WARNING: THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE DESCRIBES SEXUAL ASSAULT.** ★



The following letter was submitted by Valjean Royal to the Department of Justice on Prison Sexual Assault. Ms. Royal runs a website called "Transinjustice.org". She writes: "The U.S. Prison Rape Elimination Act required the federal government to issue finding national standards, which were released last June and now are being reviewed by the Attorney General. As part of this review, the Department of Justice has opened a 60-day public comment period on the standards [ended May 10, 2010]."

Dear Attorney General,

I would like to share my story and urge you to adopt the national standards recommended by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. I am a transgender woman, and have spent a lot of time in both jail and prison over the years. Throughout these years, one thing has remained the same: I have been raped by other inmates and staff.

It began when I was just seventeen- after I was arrested for Female Impersonation and Prostitution. I was placed in the county jail and gang-raped. As a male to female transgender (pre-op), the juvenile detention center would not allow me entry there, stating their concern for the effect of exposure to my alternative lifestyle on the other boys I would have to be housed with. So, I was sent to county jail to be housed with adults.

**NATIONAL
PRISON
RAPE
ELIMINATION
COMMISSION**

As I entered the cell block at the county jail in all female attire, the men became silent. For a moment you could hear a pin drop. One inmate promised to protect me from all the others, but that night, I felt hands gripping my ankles and pulling me out of bed toward them. I started to kick, scream, and struggle. I was taken to another cell where I was placed on the floor and raped by twenty or more men.

I was eventually able to throw a note to the turn key making rounds with my name and "HELP ME" written on a piece of paper. I was moved to another cell block, a smaller one. Even there, the cell boss sexually abused me whenever he felt like it.

I was incarcerated several additional times, during which I was raped by inmates and a correctional officer. I became dependent on marijuana use in order to rise above my circumstances. I had to numb my emotions to survive.

I was eventually placed into a federal prison for protection. While in segregation at the Federal Correctional Institution in Memphis, Tennessee, an officer let an inmate into my cell to rape me. I was placed in the hospital after reporting the rape. The investigation conducted by Internal Affairs concluded that I was raped and a video tape showed the officer letting the inmate in and out of my cell. The dismissal of the officer was recommended. I was transferred to another facility.

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After being raped again at the Federal Correctional Institution in Jessup, Georgia, I was returned to the state facility. I was raped by my cellmate at the Pendleton Correctional Facility in Pendleton, Indiana.

I think the standards are desperately needed to protect transgender women like me. Officials must make sure inmates are housed safely and supervised by staff at all time. If corrections officials were more aware of how to work with transgender inmates and others who are in great danger, prison would be safer.

Inmates need to be told clearly and plainly how to report that they have been sexually abused. The only type of protection I knew to ask for was from other inmates-- but again, they became my victimizers. A verbal report to staff should be enough for the prison to respond and make sure that the victim is taken to a safer part of the prison. And once the victim makes a report, if the prison doesn't deal with the situation, the victim needs to know that she or he can go to court.

It is hard for a lot of rape victims to get help from prison law assistance without other inmates becoming aware of the fact that they have been raped. Once this information is common knowledge, the rape victims becomes victims of another type. This could be the reason that many cases such as mine never even reach a court of law, simply because we cannot initiate this kind of legal process without the help of other inmates.



As a victim of repeated sexual assaults, I urge you to pass the Commission's standards with protections for vulnerable inmates and information about how rape victims can report a sexual assault.

These comments should be entered into the public record for Docket No. OAG-131.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Valjean Royal
Indiana

Upon its creation, the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission "undertook a comprehensive legal and factual study of the impact of prison sexual assaults on federal, state and local government functions and on the communities and social institutions in which they operate. The Commission presented its final Report and proposed Standards on June 23, 2009 to the President, Congress, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and other federal and state officials. Within a year of receiving the report and proposed standards from the Commission, the Attorney General is required by PREA to promulgate national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of detention facility sexual abuse." www.cybercemetery.unt.edu/archive/nprec/20090820154813/http://nprec.us/home/

Unfortunately, Jason of Black & Pink feels that many of the standards are insufficient, will be harmful, and will mostly perpetuate the violence of the PIC without actually alleviating much suffering for prisoners .

CALLING ALL ARTISTS! THERE ARE 24 OF YOU SO FAR!!!!!!

BLACK & PINK ART

Black & Pink Art will sell artwork and apparel printed with designs produced by queer and transgender prisoners to queer and transgender folks on the outside. Items will be sold online at blackandpinkart.org, as well as sales made at events like Pride Festivals.

Proceeds from the sales will go back into the artist's commissary account!

Want to get involved? Send a note to the address below answering these questions:

- 1) What kind of art do you make? 2) How can you receive money? 3) What can you receive or ship?
4) Roughly how much \$ would you want for your art? 5) How long does it take to make?

Black and Pink Art- Reed Miller
C/O Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston St
Boston, MA 02116

Reed Miller, a queer pen-pal, will send you back a letter explaining how things will work! He looks forward to working with you and sharing your talents with the outside world!

See Me Blind

See me blind
while my heart beats with silence
I see the
Green, blue, black and purple
you see only
Black and white
when tears are dropped
I feel, I tremble, I cringe

yet you just shrug your careless shoulders
and turn and walk away
The whole world wonders
why I care
I wonder
why they hate.

~Leslie Camps

**SEND YOUR STORIES, THOUGHTS, POEMS, DRAWINGS TO BE INCLUDED IN AN
UPCOMING ISSUE TO:**

**THANK
YOU SO
MUCH!**

BLACK AND PINK- NEWSLETTER
C/O COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON
565 BOYLSTON ST
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